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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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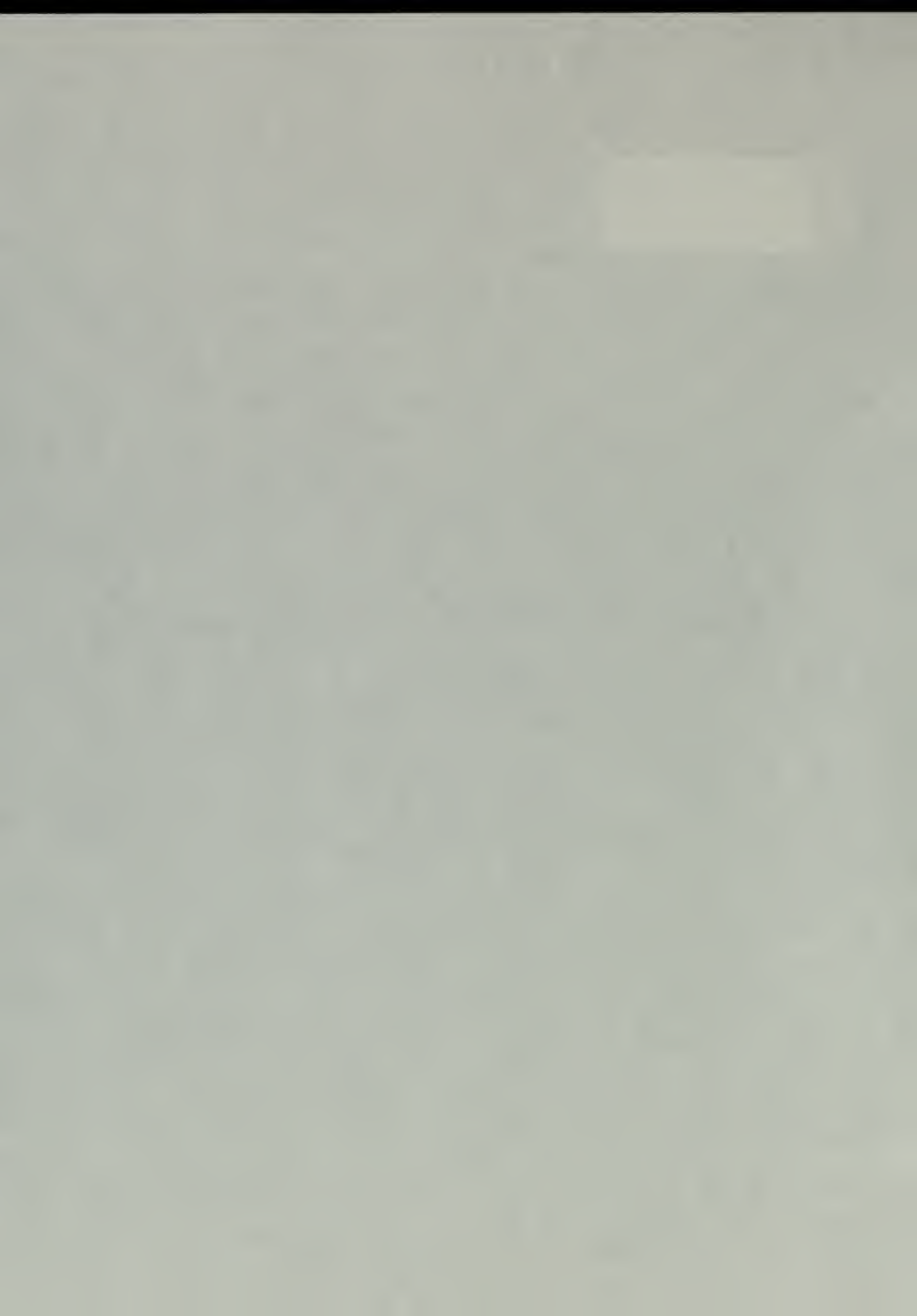
**GOVERNOR JANE SWIFT**

## **STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2002**

**HOUSE CHAMBER  
STATE HOUSE  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

*Remarks embargoed until delivery at approximately 7:30 PM*



Mr. President. Mr. Speaker. Minority Leaders. Distinguished Members of the Legislature and the Supreme Judicial Court. Constitutional Officers and Mayors of the Commonwealth. Fellow Citizens of Massachusetts. We are gathered here in this great chamber of democracy to reflect on these extraordinary times.

As a nation and as a Commonwealth, we have endured heartbreaking tragedy, but we have done so with a spirit and generosity unique to the American people.

It has been a privilege to lead our great state during this time of rapid change. The challenges we face tonight were unimaginable a year ago. But so are the opportunities.

For almost four centuries, the people of Massachusetts have been turning adversity into progress. We have learned that adversity will not diminish us; it will only make us stronger.

We value opportunity, so we will do what it takes to create good jobs and prosperity for all. We value freedom, so we will do what it takes to secure our home front and travel safely. And we value education as the foundation of our hope and of our future, so we will devote our time and resources to every child.

Achieving these goals will take the energy and commitment of each citizen, and the concerted effort of our state government.

This economy is vastly different from the one we enjoyed last year. Tonight in Massachusetts, families are coping with the impact of an economy in recession. Parents are worried about their jobs; small businesses are fighting to keep their doors open; and big companies are laying off long-time workers to stay afloat.

I understand these uncertainties. One of my most vivid memories growing up was the stress and fatigue on my parents' faces as they struggled to keep our family plumbing business going. I can picture them sitting around the kitchen table deciding what bills to



pay and who might be losing their jobs. This scene is playing out in homes and shops around the Commonwealth.

While state government alone cannot solve the problems of recession, we can lead the way to recovery. We can create a foundation for future growth. We can be a lifeline to those who need our help most.

Fiscal discipline is our first and best strategy because it helps achieve each one of those objectives. We saw what happened in the late 80s and early 90s when government tried to tax and spend its way out of serious fiscal problems. Businesses fled and workers suffered.

That's why the tax roll back – supported by an overwhelming number of voters – must and will stand. Now is not the time for government to take more money out of family budgets and small business balance sheets. Bigger paychecks mean families can pay their mortgages on time; heat will stay on this winter; and small businesses can keep their employees working. Two years ago, the people's tax cut was a matter of fairness and sound fiscal policy. Today, it is essential to easing the burdens on struggling families and putting us on the road to recovery.

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While tax policy can help save jobs, it can also help create them. The Economic Development Incentive Program is one of the state's most powerful tools. Since 1993, tax credits have provided incentives for businesses to open, expand, and relocate in Massachusetts. Almost 48,000 new jobs and over seven billion dollars in new investment have been created.

Tonight, we can build on this success by tripling our efforts for communities and regions hardest hit in this recession. I am filing legislation to boost the current five percent tax credit to 15 for target areas with high unemployment. This incentive will provide





struggling communities with a competitive edge and families living there with hope for new and better jobs.

We will also give a hand to anyone in any industry who has been laid off and is struggling to find work. We will make Emergency Training Grants available to individuals to access training and upgrade their skills. Paid for with ten million dollars in the Workforce Training Fund surplus, this program offers the resources and flexibility demanded by a recession. In addition, I am proposing the extension of the Workforce Training Fund for the next three years.

These tough times also highlight the importance of adult education and job training to the state's long-term economic success. When individuals aren't finding good jobs that lead to careers, families aren't improving their standard of living. And when downturns arrive, they have fewer skills and resources on which to rely.

The answer to this problem is to make adult education and worker training full partners in a larger system of lifelong learning. I began my administration with this as a top priority, and we've worked hard over the last several months to add resources and to reform a complex system. The budget I submit this month adds five million dollars for adult education. I'm also including new proposals for streamlining and strengthening existing programs.

Perhaps no part of our lives was changed more by the tragedy on September 11th than the sense of our own safety and that of our children. It is our challenge – and our opportunity – to redefine the state's role in creating a safe and secure Commonwealth.

Protection from foreign enemies was once the exclusive responsibility of federal authorities, but our new reality demands that state and local governments become active partners in national security. Police, firefighters, public health officials and emergency workers are our front-line soldiers in the war against terror.





These citizens have embraced their new responsibilities with the speed and commitment of our Minuteman tradition. They've worked crushing hours protecting us. I would like to express my gratitude to them, and to our Reservists and National Guardsmen and women who answered the President's call with bravery and without hesitation.

I also want to thank members of the Legislature for working with me to increase spending on public safety. We've created an additional class of State Troopers, and we've moved aggressively to obtain cutting-edge technology for state and local agencies. In the coming weeks, police, firefighters, and emergency personnel will be conducting a new round of anti-terrorism trainings in cities and towns around the Commonwealth. And thanks to the hard work of a top-notch commission, we will make Logan Airport a national model of safety and security.

Massachusetts has also been contributing to the national effort to combat bioterrorism. Our state lab has been assisting other states with Anthrax investigations; public health officials here are developing an internet-based system to share information; and our world-class medical, biotechnology, and research facilities continue to explore long-term solutions to this problem.

But with our wealth of intellectual capital, we can and must do more. Tonight, I am announcing the creation of a new Bioterrorism Council led by the Director of Commonwealth Security. Some of our brightest scientists, doctors, academics, and anti-terrorism experts will develop a preparedness strategy for Massachusetts and the New England region. While we cannot predict the future, we can prevent and prepare, maximizing every resource available to us.

Tomorrow's challenges will be met because we are tackling one important challenge today: Providing every child in the Commonwealth with an excellent education. Our future prosperity and opportunity rely increasingly on what takes place in the classroom and the career center.



What is the most powerful anti-poverty program? Education. What's the most effective crime fighting strategy? Education. What's the most successful economic development initiative? Education. If we fulfill our responsibilities, our children will fulfill theirs with healthy, productive lives. This is our challenge for today and for tomorrow; tragedies won't alter our commitment, and success won't lull us into false complacency.

We have come a long way in meeting this challenge. Dramatic improvements in statewide MCAS scores are the evidence, and they are certainly to be celebrated. But so should we celebrate what's behind them: Bright young minds being turned on to ideas...through learning that is focused and measured...by teachers who are caring and committed. If the experience of Education Reform has taught us anything, it's that having confidence in our kids is a powerful force for them and for us.

Students, educators, parents, and business partners deserve an enormous amount of credit. As do Members of the Legislature for their continued support of high standards and increased funding for our schools. Since 1993, we've invested 26 billion dollars, and I pledge to continue this investment even in tough economic times. My budget for the coming year will include a significant increase in core education funding.

But challenges remain. We must continue to help those students struggling with the learning process. This year, we will spend more on extra help programs than ever before – 50 million dollars – so that eager students like Andrea Johnson of Putnam Vocational in Springfield can continue accessing the intensive help she needs.

Andrea didn't pass the MCAS her first time around, but she was committed to success. She met with a tutor twice a week, attended Saturday school, and like over 5,000 of her fellow students, she regularly logged onto the Department of Education's free tutoring program. Andrea is with us tonight. I know you're waiting for your scores,





Andrea. I want you to know that whatever the results, we won't turn our back on you. We are committed to your success. We're with you for the long haul.

We must also redouble our efforts to help students of color and those with limited English-speaking skills meet this challenge. When less than a third of our Latino students in the Class of 2003 are passing the MCAS, we know we have work to do. We must ensure that remediation dollars are getting to their schools. But we also need to understand why they are struggling more than most.

Fluency in English is playing a role. Almost 40 percent of those students who didn't take the test are those struggling to learn English. The MCAS has revealed that our current approach is failing to meet the needs of language minority students.

Learning English is a temporary challenge that once met, is a passport to opportunity for immigrants. It was a barrier my grandmother faced when she fled war-torn Italy. And while she spoke with an accent all her life, she mastered the words and skills needed to raise a family and to work in the same factory for 49 years.

I want to make it easier for today's immigrants. I am filing legislation that will overhaul our bilingual education system by eliminating its current one-size-fits-all approach and replacing it with flexibility and choices for families and for schools. Districts will be able to determine the best teaching method for their students, and parents will be encouraged to play a larger role in the process. My plan doesn't eliminate the current approach. It allows educators a wider range of choices.

We know from experience that this works. In Lawrence, recent immigrants are learning English through a variety of methods in charter and district schools. At Lawrence Community Day Charter School, for example, students are thriving on high standards and creative, energetic teaching. They have the MCAS scores to prove it.





In 1862, Abraham Lincoln prepared a divided Congress for the challenges of the Civil War: “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present,” he said. “The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise to the occasion.” Turning our own challenges into opportunity requires that this legislature and all elected officials rededicate ourselves to the most important tenets of our democracy: Freedom. Openness. Honesty. These principles are what the terrorists attacked. They’re what our own Sergeant Dan Petithory gave his life defending. And they are what we are sworn to uphold.

We are privileged to serve in elective office in the greatest democracy in the world at a time of national challenge. And while we may have policy differences throughout the coming year, our responsibility is to conduct the people’s business in a manner worthy of the people’s trust. This means producing a budget on time and in balance. Let’s show the citizens of Massachusetts that they can be proud of their government. The people of this Commonwealth deserve to have elected officials who rise above self-interest to work effectively and efficiently for the greater good.

The challenges we currently face provide us with an opportunity to restore public trust in an age of increasing cynicism. Public service cannot be seen as self-service. What better way to win back their trust than by honoring the will of the people? When people vote for clean elections, fund them. When people vote for lower taxes, roll them back.

What is the State of our State? The State of our State is filled with promise. We have fiscal problems, but we have recognized them; we have ample reserves if we use them judiciously; and we have a business environment that can and will create good jobs for families. Unlike a decade ago, our economy is sitting on a strong foundation.

We are addressing threats to our public safety with innovation and tenacity; and we are working tirelessly to create a world-class education system for every child.



Other challenges remain. My brief address covers just a few. We will work to resolve the health care crisis in our capital city and throughout the state; we will finish the nation's largest construction project with responsible management accountable to the people and turn its scarred surface into a treasured jewel for years to come. We will eliminate barriers to affordable housing and expand the supply through continued investment; and we will provide prescription drug benefits and home care to our elderly and neediest citizens.

We live in uncertain times. But we are Americans, a resilient, hopeful, generous people. To us, challenge equals opportunity – opportunity to improve our lives and to make the world a better place for our children. This is our moment to add greatness to the pages of the Commonwealth's long, enduring history. If our legacy is one of safe neighborhoods, a world-class education system, and a vibrant, growing economy, then we will have honored past and future generations.

Thank you and good night.

